

Parks Legacy Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Notes for Meeting #4

September 5, 2013

Committee Members Present: Co-chair Barbara Wright, Thatcher Bailey, Steve Daschle, Bill Farmer, Juli Farris, Thomas Goldstein, Jessie Israel, Diana Kincaid, Michael Maddux, Mustapha Math, David Namura

Committee Members Not in Attendance: Brice Maryman, Yalonda Gill Masundire, Erika Nurenberg-Melroy, Charlie Zaragoza

Welcoming Remarks

- Barbara Wright welcomed the Committee members and members of the public to the fourth meeting of the Parks Legacy Citizens Advisory Committee

Public Comments

- **Seema Junejo:** Ms. Junejo is the mother of 4, living in West Seattle, and is a member of the Women in Action Team at Neighborhood House. Kids need to learn how to swim. While there are some scholarships for lessons, there are no discounts for practice, and it is expensive to teach kids to swim. Please keep pool rates affordable for low income families.
- **Mawada Hamam:** Ms. Hamam is a low income resident of High Point. \$2-\$3 is the most she can pay for recreation. The women-only swims are affordable, but they only happen once a week. Please keep this affordable and add scholarships for regular swims and for tennis. Please do more outreach for scholarships.
- **Jennifer Calleja:** Ms. Calleja is with Neighborhood House. The women-only swims are very popular with immigrant and refugee women. In general Parks programs aren't affordable for low income people. Also, low income people need programs close to where they live. Please provide culturally appropriate programs for neighborhoods and meaningful community engagement.
- **Robert Stevens:** Mr. Stevens is with the Central Area Cultural Arts Commission. The Garfield Super Block project is a part of the Garfield High School renovation project. City departments pledged to help renovate the entire block, including upgrading pathways, better seating, and an improved historical area path. Garfield park is a legacy park: the land was owned by Chief Seattle's mother and was purchased from the Duwamish tribe by Henry Yesler.
- **Deborah Jensen:** Ms. Jensen is the President and CEO of the Woodland Park Zoo. The Zoo Society has had a 20 year partnership with the city. The City owns the buildings and grounds and the Zoo Society owns the animals. Capital projects and major maintenance at the Zoo has been under invested for a long time. In 2002 there was a recognized \$11 million backlog major maintenance backlog; since 2008, the Zoo has received no major maintenance funds from the City. Infrastructure priority problems were assessed and require \$2 million a year to address them, including:
 - Seismic improvements to several buildings;

- Roof replacements, water, irrigation and electrical system repairs (the Zoo is experiencing regular power outages).

In addition, two buildings have significant additional needs, estimated at \$7.35 million:

- The Tropical Rain Forest building needs a \$3.3 million upgrade, including a new roof;
- The Day and Night Building has requirements totaling \$4 million.

Introductory Remarks from Barbara Wright

- The Committee is entering a messy time with lots of information to digest
- Staff will be providing additional info on costs of the Investment Initiatives and outcomes, plus a glossary of terms
- At the Sept. 19 meeting the Committee will be putting the Initiatives in priority order
- For now, the assignment is to identify:
 - What is missing
 - What could be eliminated
 - What catches your imagination
- In October, the Committee will take a deep financial dive
- The co-chairs and staff are proposing creating 2 subcommittees:
 - A Race and Social Justice one to work with Parks staff on updating the Racial Equity Toolkit assessment of the Parks Legacy project
 - A Naming Committee to come up with more compelling language

New Impressions from Park Tours

The Committee has been looking at “the good, the bad and the ugly” in the Parks system and provided additional comments (comments were also provided at the Aug. 15 meeting)

- Some things are in great shape and some are in horrible shape – and not much in between
- The West Seattle Stadium is an example of some very needed maintenance
- It is impressive to see so many volunteers working in parks
- The new boat launch in Rainier Beach is very nice and the new community center is great
- The 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy included major maintenance projects, such as play area upgrades, athletic field renovations and conversion of wading pools to spray parks
- Hubbard Homestead Park is a big concern – there is no play area, and the Park looks desolate, despite a \$4 million investment from the 2008 Levy

Introduction to Investment Initiatives

Parks Acting Superintendent Christopher Williams gave introductory remarks about the Investment Initiatives Parks is proposing and his beliefs about Seattle’s parks and recreation system.

- Every person should have access to parks and recreation
- We need to work hard to serve the underserved

- Parks needs to be good neighbors, meaning we need to mow the grass and maintain our parks; there are 63,000 direct neighbors – and Parks has 10% of the City’s property
- Parks should offer something for everyone
 - We are a big urban system and there should be something for our broad, diverse community
- Our legacy is non-static – we must adapt and change with the population
- We must be smart about managing the system
 - Develop partnerships
 - Leverage resources with both in-City and outside organizations
 - Don’t be too protective of our line of business
- Density is increasing – we must take this on in a smart way
 - Bell Street Park is an example of innovation within a dense neighborhood
- We have a stewardship responsibility and must plan for the future
- The Essential Services listed in the Investment Initiatives are the backbone of what we do, including park and facility maintenance and keeping our community centers open
- Looking to the Future Initiatives anticipate trends – the next big ideas
 - Connect to the public and new ideas
 - Open young people’s eyes – making an impact one person at a time
 - How we position the organization to meet the challenges of the future
 - Enrich the park user experience
 - Enhance programs for teens, seniors and people with disabilities
- Potential Partnership Initiatives are becoming increasingly important as we look to meeting future needs
 - Need to be strategic leveraging partnerships – both volunteers and organizations
 - In 2012 there were almost 400,000 volunteer hours provided to Parks and Recreation
 - Parks traditional partners like the Zoo and Aquarium are particularly important; partnerships with other City departments, plus our partnerships with outside organizations provide public services with leveraged/reduced costs
 - Through smart management we can achieve public benefits using City resources the least
- Strategic Enhancement Initiatives help us plan for the future, expanding the system to meet the City’s expanding population and diverse needs
 - This category includes opportunity funds to invest in the future

Applying the Assessment Criteria to the Investment Initiatives

Acting Deputy Superintendent Eric Friedli described how the Assessment Criteria developed by the Committee were applied to the Investment Initiatives.

- The criteria were operationalized with scores
- Staff will do a “straw man” ranking and provide that to the Committee for members to react to
- There will be a glossary of terms to more fully define the Assessment Criteria

Comments from Committee members on the Assessment Criteria included:

- As the Committee moves through the process, it is important to stay loose – we don't have all the criteria in place, as it is an iterative process
- A tighter definition for equitable access is needed to get at serving the underserved, low income neighborhoods

Introduction and Discussion of Investment Initiatives for Partnerships, Strategic Enhancements, and Looking to the Future

Parks six Division Directors presented information on the proposed Investment Initiatives in the following categories: Looking to the Future, Strategic Enhancements and Potential Partnerships. Notes from the presentations are included in Attachment A.

Comments from Committee members follow.

- Make sure we meet Parks mission as the Committee prioritizes the Initiatives
- Can information be provided that shows what is a restoration of previous cuts and what is additive
- Every Initiative is important to some constituency; we need to start putting the pros and cons on the table
- What was Parks baseline budget in 2005/2006? We need a clear picture of the funding trend.
- Think bigger and more comprehensively about the City and open space and the real legacy of Parks and Recreation
- Safety should be another overlay in the criteria
- It is important to get to a sustainable level of asset management – not just keeping up, but getting on top of the backlog; how much will it take to get us there
- Evaluate whether we are the best people to do the work – who else could be providing the service
- The Committee's work should create a legacy
- Are there Initiatives that more appropriately should be part of Parks budget, rather than part of a new funding package
- The partnership and challenge fund Initiatives are especially compelling
- The human infrastructures is as important as the physical infrastructure

Public Comment, Continued

- **Gordon Padelford:** Mr. Padelford, a volunteer with Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, spoke in favor of Investment Initiative #30, "Greenways with Seattle Department of Transportation and Others." The City is transforming how we think about streets. Consider how we safely get to parks and safely walk through parks.
- **Joyce Moty:** Ms. Moty is the President of the P-Patch Trust. The 2008 Levy had \$2.4 million for p-patches; 700 new plots have been created, but the work is not done. The program is 40 years

old and the older p-patches need help: they were not professionally designed and don't have ADA access. Plus there is a 1,000 person waiting list. P-patches contribute more than 25,000 pounds of food to feeding programs.

- **Sharon LeVine:** Do not approve a Metropolitan Park District as it will disenfranchise citizens. People in Seattle love parks and support levies. Adding an off-leash area in Queen Anne will bring big support for a levy, as dog owners are a big constituency. \$80,000 has already been raised for a QA off-leash area and a site has been identified. Also, there is a need for increased maintenance for the 14 existing off-leash areas.
- **Carol Fisher:** Thank you for including Lifelong Recreation in the Investment Initiatives. Initiative #19 is more than day trips for seniors as there will be a focus on immigrant and refugee communities and people with early onset of dementia. The Food and Fitness programs bring in people for low cost lunches and physical exercise; in 2012, 10,840 meals were provided to Ethiopian, Eritrean and Vietnamese people. Also, van replacement is needed and is not currently funded.
- **John Geiger:** Mr. Geiger represents the Seattle Chinese Garden. The Garden is an innovative project that ties into the legacy. Stories on the Garden blog highlight community diversity and participation. Maintenance and operation of the Garden is a challenge; volunteers and donors and community pride help make the Garden sustainable.
- **Jay Satz:** Mr. Satz is the vice-president of the Student Conservation Association which connects young people to conservation service. The Committee is thinking of the right things regarding preserving the parks legacy. The partnerships with Parks could be expanded to include school. The Student Conservation Association works with students to get work done on the ground and the students become the legacy – the next generation of conservationists.
- **Michael Oxman:** Mr. Oxman is an arborist. City trees need work. The Urban Forestry Commission recommended doubling arborists – doubling the visits they make to care for trees. Trees are living and need to be visited every seven years – same principle as going to the dentist. Storm damage wouldn't be as severe if the trees are in good shape.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15.

Attachment A

Investment Initiative Presentation: Looking to the Future, Strategic Enhancements and Potential Partnerships

Parks Legacy Plan Investment Initiatives

September 5, 2013
Looking to the Future; \$12,138,000

"Honoring our parks legacy; enriching the human spirit; and innovating for the future." This is the vision for Seattle Parks and Recreation recommended by the Board of Park Commissioners. Innovating for the future requires more than expanding existing services to accommodate population growth. The demographic and recreation trends analyses in the Parks Legacy Plan provide data-based insight into the future so Parks can meet emerging needs and remain relevant to a changing city. Operational funding will be needed in coming years to meet emerging needs and commitments and capital funding to create new park facilities, as follows:

Environment (\$950,000)

13. Expand natural area stewardship to meet Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) goals to address long term forest restoration needs following the initial clearing, planting and establishment work. (\$950,000)

New Development (\$8,179,000)

14. Develop and maintain 14 new parks at "land-banked" sites that have been acquired in the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy. (\$1,278,000 annual payments for 12 years on \$11M debt financed project plus a total of \$1,680,000 for routine maintenance for total cost per year over 12 of \$2,958,000)

15. Develop and maintain the new Smith Cove park site that is being acquired from the Port of Seattle. (\$349,000 annual payments for 12 years on \$3m debt financed project plus \$200,000 for routine maintenance per year for a total cost per year over 12 years of \$549,000).

16. Develop and operate a new outdoor pool in the north part of either Rainier Valley or north Beacon Hill. (\$1,162,000 annual payments for 12 years on \$10M debt financed project)

17. Provide for maintenance and management of the new Seattle waterfront park spaces. (\$3,510,000)

Planning Resources (\$700,000)

18. Implement staff recruitment and improve training programs to foster an effective work force. (\$700,000)

Recreation Services (\$1,309,000)

19. Expand day trips, opportunities and programs for older adults in the Lifelong Recreation program. (\$135,000)

20. Expand Special Populations Program capacity for summer youth camps. (\$85,000)

21. Improve and expand teen program delivery at the community centers. (\$554,000)

22. Increase ability to engage historically underrepresented communities. Add resources to develop and sustain partnerships with outside organizations to better meet the needs of target populations or better serve a particular community. (\$315,000)

23. Provide for environmental education outreach and partnerships. (\$220,000)

Routine Maintenance (\$450,000)

24. Enhance existing Downtown parks maintenance and activation. (\$250,000)

25. Provide for Athletic Field Care and Synthetic Turf Maintenance. (\$200,000)

Safety (\$550,000)

26. Improve park safety by adding park rangers as well as assignment of animal control officers to parks. (\$550,000)

Parks Legacy Plan Investment Initiatives

September 5, 2013

Strategic Enhancements; \$18,005,000

These investments fund the behind-the-scenes processes and programs that would help the department become more responsive to community wishes and needs. Additional staff resources are needed to undertake the following:

Major Maintenance (\$12,800,000)

6. Eliminate the Major Maintenance Backlog. (\$11,500,000)

7. Environmental Sustainability Fund. Provide funds to allow for enhancements to major maintenance projects focused on environmental sustainability. Examples may include solar panels, solar hot water, geothermal energy, etc. (\$1,300,000)

New Development (\$4,000,000)

8. Major Projects Opportunity Challenge Fund. Implement a challenge grant program to provide funds that can match funds raised by Advisory Councils, "Friends" groups and other partners in order to improve recreational facilities such as the Green Lake Small Craft Center and the Amy Yee Tennis Center. (\$3,000,000)

9. Park Acquisition Leverage Fund. Provide funds to leverage grant funding from the King County Conservation Futures tax and other sources in order to pursue the acquisition of properties in Seattle's greenbelts and natural areas, as well as new parks in underserved areas per the "Gap Analysis." (\$1,000,000)

Planning Resources (\$1,205,000)

10. Address Property Encroachments. Add staff resources to properly address various property matters such as encroachments, revocable uses, and other such issues in the 6,000-plus acre park system. (\$365,000)

11. Community Project Opportunity Response Fund. Add planning, design and construction management staff to address various community proposals for park improvements, many of which are associated with donations. (\$600,000)

12. Develop Management Plans for Regional and Major Urban Parks. Add planning and design staff to develop management plans for Seattle's larger parks to guide their use as well as to outline any future developments or renovations. (\$240,000)

Parks Legacy Plan Investment Initiatives

September 5, 2013

Potential Partnerships; \$4,826,000

Partnerships are innovative, cost effective means to provide and maintain parks and recreation services. The Parks Legacy Plan showcases Parks strong partnerships with non-profits such as the Associated Recreation Council, the Seattle Parks Foundation, the zoo, aquarium and the arboretum. Expanding partnerships with City agencies maximizes the effectiveness of each partner with each agencies' strengths and expertise combining to make the sum of the whole greater than the individual parts. A current example is Parks ongoing partnership with the Department of Neighborhoods which has led to hundreds of Neighborhood Matching Fund projects that have built new play areas, planted gardens and spruced up tired parks. New funding could provide an ongoing source of money to support partnerships with other City agencies that align with Parks' mission.

Environment (\$500,000)

27. Environmental Innovations with the Office of Sustainability and Environment. Develop "flagship" demonstration projects to showcase green infrastructure in parks. (\$500,000)

Major Maintenance (\$3,200,000)

28. Major Maintenance Seattle Aquarium Fund. Reduce the major maintenance backlog by providing for infrastructure renovations. (\$1,200,000)

29. Major Maintenance Woodland Park Zoo Fund. Reduce the major maintenance backlog by providing for infrastructure renovations. (\$2,000,000)

New Development (\$820,000)

30. Greenways with Seattle Department of Transportation (SOOT) and others. Make small scale capital investments to improve bicycle and pedestrian access to existing parks and trails; and provide resources to activate streets and boulevards with events and activities. (\$320,000)

31. Establish a Neighborhood Park Enhancement program with the Seattle Parks Foundation that will clean-up and maintain neighborhood parks in consort with the efforts of "Friends" groups or other neighborhood and volunteer organizations throughout the City. (\$500,000)

Recreation (\$306,000)

32. Arts opportunities with the Office of Arts and Culture. Provide resources to produce arts events and programs in neighborhoods outside the urban core, with a focus on neighborhoods with immigrant and refugee populations. (\$170,000)

33. Homeless Life Skills Job Training with Human Services Agencies. Establish life-skills and job training outreach programs to address homelessness and poverty in the urban core. (\$136,000)